

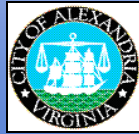
Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP)



Office of the State
Long-Term Care
Ombudsman

Promoting Quality - Protecting Rights

*Serving the Jurisdictions of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun,
through their Area Agencies on Aging*



THE UPDATE

Volume 8 Issue 6 December 2014



Older adults and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by chronic illness. According to a Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, almost 91% of older adults live with at least one chronic condition and almost 75% have at least two. In a 30-day period, people with chronic disease experience an average of nine days of restricted activity compared to their counterparts, whose average is two days.

Through the *You Can! Live Well, Virginia!* Chronic Disease Self-Management Education programs, individuals coping with chronic diseases can take steps to improve their overall health, feel better, and live life to the fullest. At the state level, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services is partnering with the Department of Public Health to coordinate

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training, licensing, quality assurance, outreach, evaluation and technical assistance for local programs delivering this program through their Area Agencies on Aging. The core program has been shown to reduce healthcare costs by decreasing the number of emergency room visits, the number of hospital admissions, and hospital length of stay.

The program is delivered through supportive interactive workshops, often led by others with chronic conditions. Participants learn about a variety of topics, such as:

- Healthy eating and exercise choices
- Evaluating new treatment choices
- Appropriate use of medications
- Effective ways to talk with healthcare professionals and loved ones

Most importantly, participants help each other through the group meetings, by brainstorming and problem-solving while developing weekly achievable action plans. Mutual support and success build the participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health.

This program was developed by Stanford University. It is a 6-week series of 2 1/2 hour workshops that offers tools and information to help people manage their chronic illnesses, live healthier lives and be able to participate more fully in life.

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn when classes are being held.

Alexandria	703-746-5999
Arlington	703-228-1700
Fairfax	703-324-7948
Loudoun	703-777-0257

*TTY 711 for all numbers



Out and Visible: A Study of LGBT Older Adults

SAGE, which stands for Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Older Adults, has released a new study called, *Out and Visible: The Experiences and Attitudes of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Older Adults ages 45-75*. This examines the values, needs, wants and lifestyle preferences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older people given their unique challenges. The objective of the study is to inform healthcare providers and leaders in government about the need to create services and policies to respond to this growing demographic that is currently underserved.

There were five key areas that this study looked into: healthcare, finance and retirement, support systems, housing and sources of information. The findings show that:

- More LGBT older people are concerned about having enough money to live on as they age compared to non-LGBT people;
- They are very concerned about being lonely and growing old alone compared to non-LGBT older people as their social group grows smaller over time;
- LGBT older adults do not disclose their sexual orientation to their healthcare providers, which can lead to not getting appropriate care for their health issues;
- A large percent of LGBT older adults are very interested in living in LGBT-friendly affordable housing as they age;
- Both LGBT and non-LGBT populations are likely to look to the internet and their family and friends for information on aging

The study concludes that LGBT older adults are facing a more severe "retirement crisis" than their non-LGBT peers and points to the importance addressing their needs through creating policy and services.

The Five Biggest Mistakes Boomers Make When Enrolling in Medicare

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) created [My Medicare Matters.org](http://MyMedicareMatters.org) to help baby boomers avoid costly mistakes when signing up for Medicare. These mistakes include:

1. **Signing up too early or too late for Medicare and its parts.** There is a Medicare Quick Check service available on www.MyMedicareMatters.org that can provide a personal report and give recommendations about signing up for which parts of Medicare are best for you.
2. **Not understanding the difference** between a Medicare Supplement (Medigap), which covers some services that are not included in Medicare A and B, and a Medicare Advantage policy, which takes the place of Medicare A and B. Both of these options involve paying an additional monthly premium. You can learn the different pros and cons to see which plan is best for you. You can change the plan during open enrollment if you decide to.
3. **Guessing when picking specific plans.** While it is very time-consuming to compare all of the options available, it is important to consider your health insurance needs carefully so that you're not guessing at a plan. Review your health insurance needs very carefully.
4. **Not applying for extra help.** There are programs that can help older adults pay for prescription and health insurance premiums, etc. The National Council on Aging website offers a free online service called www.BenefitsCheckUp.org. Find out what you might qualify for and apply online for Extra Help or Medicare Savings Programs. You can also contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program.
5. **Not re-evaluating your coverage every year.** It is important to consider if your health has changed and whether the plan you have meets your current needs, how much your out-of-pocket costs were, how the plan might change in the year ahead and the costs involved, and whether there are better options available.

Need Information or Have a Concern About Nursing or Assisted Living Facilities?

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

12011 Government Center Parkway,
Suite 708

Fairfax, VA 22035

Offices hours are Monday through Friday
from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Intake Line: 703-324-5861 TTY: 711

Fax: 703-324-3575

Email us at:

NVLT COP@FairfaxCounty.Gov

To view information on the NVLT COP website and to see the Investigation and Complaint Log, please go to:

www.FairfaxCounty.Gov/LTC Ombudsman

What an Ombudsman does:

- ♦ **Advocates** for improving the quality of life for persons receiving long-term care services
- ♦ **Resolves complaints** against long-term care providers through **counseling, negotiation, and investigation**
- ♦ **Provides information** about long-term care providers to help make an informed decision
- ♦ **Educates** the community about long-term care issues
- ♦ **Visits** residents of long-term care facilities on a weekly basis through our volunteer program

December 1 to 5 is Older Driver's Safety Awareness Week

The American Occupational Therapy Association specified December 1 to 5 as **Older Driver's Safety Awareness Week**. Their aim is to promote how important mobility and transportation is for older adults. It allows them to remain active and independent so that they can live life to its fullest. There are several approaches they recommend doing during this week:

Monday—Identify the Changes that can effect driving. As we age, changes occur in our physical, emotional, and cognitive health. Occupational therapy addresses driving as an essential activity of daily living.

Tuesday—Family Conversations. It is important to have a conversation early on with the older adult in order to allow time for planning and exploration of options.

Wednesday—Screening and Evaluations with an Occupational Therapist. If an older adult decides they need to get a check-up on their driving ability, there are occupational therapy driving rehabilitation specialists who can help with either a self-assessment or a professional comprehensive driving evaluation.

Thursday—Equipment that can Empower Drivers. In order to ensure safety, there is a broad range of solutions that may include adding adaptive equipment.

Friday—Taking Changes in Stride. Family and friends need to know about the resources that are available for continued independent mobility in the community. When some reaches the point of being unable to drive, or limiting it, there are options for the older adult to stay involved in their community.

Events this month:

December 1 is World AIDS Day, which was created to commemorate those who have died of AIDS, and to acknowledge the need for a continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

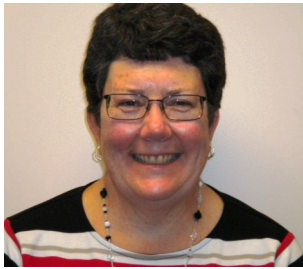
December 10 is International Human Rights Day, established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Recruiting Older Adults Into Research (ROAR)

The National Institute on Aging (NIA), in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Administration for Community Living created the ROAR program—Recruiting Older Adults into Research as part of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease, which aims to find a cure by 2025. The best hope of finding new ways to treat and prevent diseases is through research. Due to the urgent need, the ROAR program wants to encourage older adults and caregivers to participate in research studies. This program will start with a focus on Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias.

If you are interested in learning more about the ROAR program, you can call 1-866-321-0259 or go to www.ResearchMatch.org/Roar. If you decide to sign up, you will be contacted when researchers are in your area. The information you provide them will be kept confidential. It is your choice if you want to participate in the research.



Volunteer Ombudsman Spotlight

Let us introduce you to Nancy Makara, a volunteer for the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Nancy helps to process the volunteer reports, enter them into the program database, prepare for new volunteer trainings, print badges, attends trainings and does anything else that needs to be done to support the staff and Volunteer Ombudsmen.

Nancy says that she volunteers because she has some free time offer others who can use some help and who can use her particular skill set. Volunteering makes her feel good and useful. When asked, what she enjoys most about the work, Nancy says, "I'm probably one of very few people who love data entry. I also enjoy being around the Ombudsman staff; they are a great bunch and have made me feel like one of the team. I'm doing administrative work for a great group of ladies and volunteers who are advocates for the residents of nursing and assisted living facilities. I do whatever I can to make their lives easier."

Nancy was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Elliott City, Maryland with two sisters. She has been married for 31 years to a career Army officer and they have two sons, one who works in Public Health and the other is a Professor of Middle East studies. Nancy graduated from the University of Delaware with a nursing degree, and then went into the Army Nurse Corps. While stationed in Germany for three years, she and her husband loved taking advantage of travel opportunities. They moved to Virginia in 1988 when her husband was stationed at the Pentagon. While raising her children, she worked for an interior designer on home décor.

When asked what a perfect day would look like to her, Nancy said, "Having my husband home for the day and doing something together and getting my reading time in." Her passions include reading, needlecrafts, cooking and taking care of her family. A perfect day in our office includes Nancy's friendly smile and an offer of her help. Thank you, Nancy. We're so grateful that you have chosen to work with us!



The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all programs and services. To request reasonable accommodations or alternate formats, call 703-324-5861 (voice); 711 (TTY).

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